



**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**

# **Grizzly Bear Recovery Update**

*Montana Legislature: Environmental Quality Council*

*September 28, 2017*

## **Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem:**

- Population delisted July 2017
- Currently in litigation; 6 complaints filed

## **Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE):**

- Evaluation of recovery and potential delisting included in USFWS' 2018 national work plan
  - Population: ~ 1000 bears, with 2.3 % annual growth
  - Occupied Range: has more than doubled since listing in 1975
- USFWS currently working on several preliminary steps:
  - a. Habitat-Based Recovery Criteria
    - Required by court settlement in 1997
    - Developed with USFS and other management partners
    - Proposed Rule to publish within the next month; Final Rule to publish early 2018
    - Criteria: maintain the following at or above baseline levels that existed in 2011 on Federal lands:
      - Secure core and open and total road densities
      - Overnight developed recreation sites
      - Livestock allotments
  - b. Conservation Strategy (CS) - Federal, State and Tribal Plan for the NCDE
    - Drafted in 2013; revision process recently initiated by agencies
    - CS summarizes management strategies and regulatory mechanisms for grizzly bear population, bear/human conflicts, and habitat to maintain recovery
  - c. Status Evaluation
    - Formal evaluation of recovery goals
      - i. Minimum number of females with cubs of the year
        - 10 inside Glacier NP, 12 outside Glacier NP; 6 year average
      - ii. Occupancy of females with young
        - 21 of 23 Bear Management Units occupied ; 6 year sum
      - iii. Human-caused mortality
        - ≤ 4% of population estimate; ≤ 30% females
    - Threats analysis
    - Potential proposed rule

### **Cabinet Yaak Ecosystem (CYE)**

- US District Court of Missoula invalidated the USFWS's decision that the CYE population no longer warranted uplisting to endangered; August 22, 2017
  - CYE now warranted but precluded from Endangered status. This will have no practical effect on current on-the-ground management strategies
- 1993 Recovery Plan strategy is to delist each recovery zone individually as they reach recovery; each recovery zone has separate recovery criteria. CYE has not achieved recovery to date.
  - Population~ 56 bears